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Christmas tide, and with
cordial wishes
for a
Happy New Year.

Wm O. Rogers

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December 25. 1911

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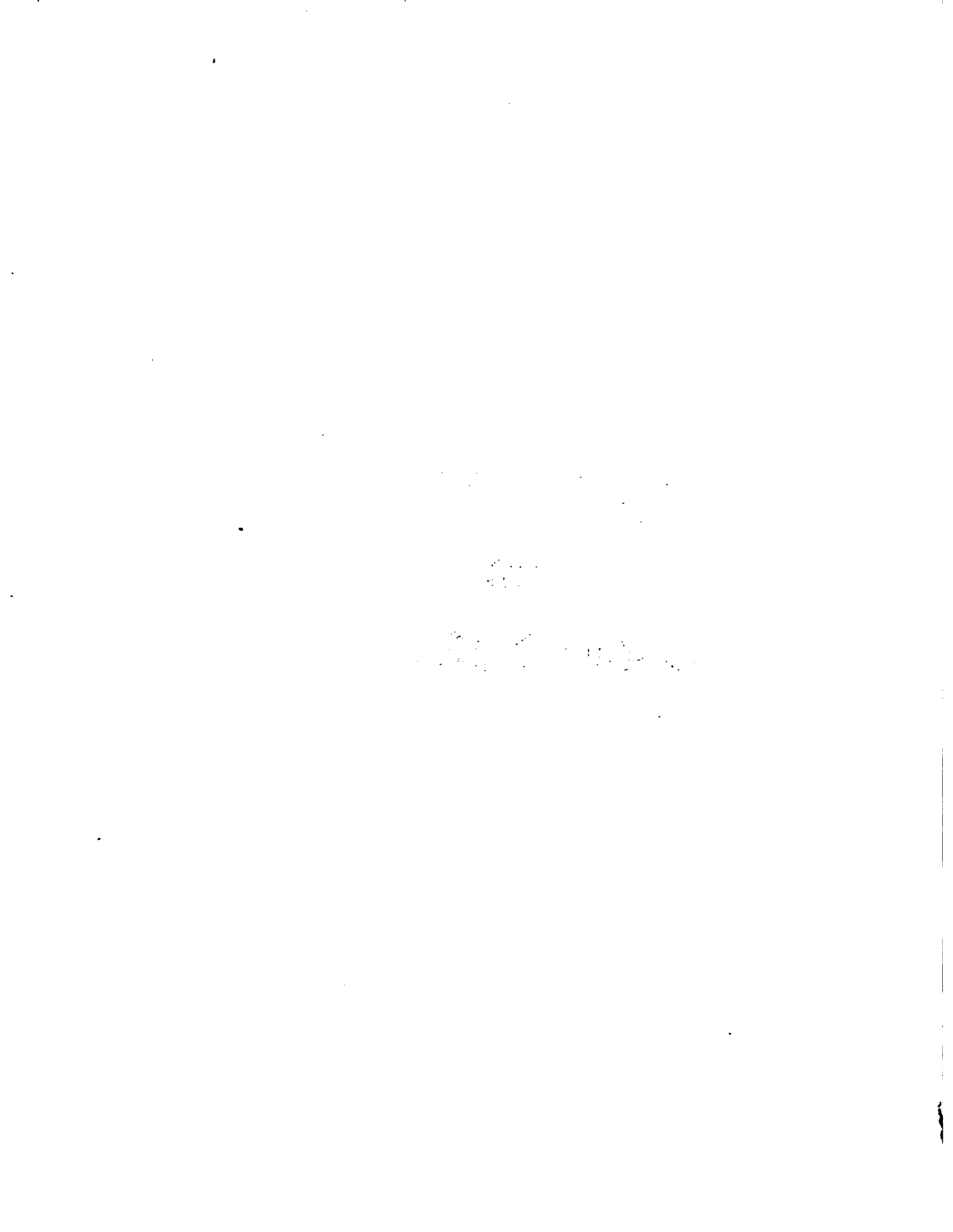
To My Children

and

To Sacred Memories



FOREWORD

The verse of this little book has been written under the limitations of old age. The work of a layman, the verse is not exigetical and may often fail to express the full and approved meaning of the respective Bible text, but I am not without the hope that something may somewhere be found in the book not altogether inappropriate to the sacred theme and not entirely out of sympathy with the thought of those who know and love the Word.

In these "piping times" old age is not at a premium in the market-place, but it is not without its private resources. It is not necessarily as a Valley of Dry Bones, nor is it always desolated by the storms of winter. In our temperate zone, genial Nature asserts itself in the patches of green that line our highways or define our hedges and garden walks, despite blizzards and snow-drifts. All seasons of the year enter in the light and shadows of a winter day. So, also, the winter of life has its inheritances. Loves and friendships mingle with the evening twilight. The promise of spring, the fulness of summer and the ripeness of autumn are mingled in the glow of the Christmas fire and respond to the gladness of the Christmas greeting.

W. O. R.

Madison, New Jersey, Dec., 1911.

THE BIBLE

O Book of Books that ne'er grows old,
Though centuries o'er thee roll,
That tells the tale none else hath told,
The one immortal scroll.

Naught strikes the keynotes of our life
That does not sound in thee:
No trumpet calls to moral strife,
But sounds thy victory.

The hidden springs of secret thought,
The source of emprise high,
Are stirred by message thou hast brought,
The fountain ne'er runs dry.

It breaks the prison bars of sin,
And bids the captives free,
It sounds above the strife and din,
The world's great jubilee.

Part First

Old Testament

THE BOND OF EARTH AND SKY

While the Earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.—Genesis, viii:22.

Earth in the beauty of her primal morn,
Has heard the mandate of her King,
And swift the message by his heralds borne,
O'er land and sea, with tireless wing.

They bade the clouds release their hoarded gain,
To swell the cisterns of the hill,
While in the valley waved the golden grain,
And songs of praise the temples fill.

The trees heard—stalwart oak and stately pine—
That guard the treasures of the brook.
"Trees of the Lord," that shelter man and kine,
The peaceful glade, the dreamy nook.

Sun and Moon heard and wooed the sea with tide,
That sway the world in ebb and flow,
As waves of human thought the masses guide,
When changing seasons come and go.

Man heard and sprang to his allotted toil,
And built his storehouse strong and high,
Assured of day and night and harvest soil,
As marriage bond of Earth and Sky.

THE MANNA

And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, it is Manna; for they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them: This is the bread that the Lord hath given you to eat.—Exodus, xvi:15.

Know ye the Manna as it falls to Earth,
The bread of heaven that comes each day,
To those who in this wilderness of dearth
Seek a Promised Land so far away?

When oft with struggling worn, heart-sick and sore,
With naught but desert sands in sight,
While hunger murmurs for lost Egypt's store;
Does Manna fall with dews of night?

Whence comes the spirit food that mortals need,
To stay the craving of the soul?
Can Earth with all its wealth of products yield
The strength that bears us to our goal?

O Father God, to whom for bread we pray,
Give us to know this heavenly food,
That we may safely journey on each day,
And find in Thee our highest good.

THE FIRST FRUITS

As for the oblation of the first fruits, ye shall offer them unto the Lord, but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet Savour.—Leviticus, ii:12.

Lord of the harvest, all is Thine,
The fatness of the fields,
The ripened fruit of tree and vine,
The wealth that Nature yields.

The plowshare and the sickle meet,
With sheaves of golden grain;
The sowers and the reapers greet,
And press the loaded wain.

The rustle of the spring that thrills
With joys of summer time,
The winter rest for autumn rills,
The seasons, all are Thine.

To Thee, with song, the toilers come,
And throng Thy Holy Ways,
With tribute brought from "Harvest Home"
And frankincense of praise.

THE UNCHANGING GOD

God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent. Hast he said and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good?—Numbers, xxiii:19.

He changes not. It is not chance that reigns,
Else suns would in wild courses burn,
And ruin, far beyond man's wildest dreams,
Would these fair skies to chaos turn.

He changes not. Therefore, men serenely build,
And plan and weave and till the soil,
To find their barns with fruit and treasures filled,
The promised gains of honest toil.

He changes not. The codes of Wrong and Right,
In their solemn grandeur stand,
Unmoved by time, or fraud, or human might,
Upheld by His almighty hand.

THE MERCIFUL GOD

For the Lord, thy God, is a merciful God: He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.–Deuteronomy, iv:31.

To Thee, Lord God, most merciful and good,
Who ne'er thy people did forsake,
With whom thy covenant has firmly stood,
To thee, O Lord, our prayer we make.

Not for ourselves alone the soul's deep cry,
As truths eternal claim our view;
But love supreme would hold its treasures high
And plead Thy promise for them, too.

JOSHUA'S OLD AGE

Now Joshua was old and stricken in years, and the Lord said unto him. Thou art old and stricken in years and there remaineth yet much land to be possessed.—Joshua, xiii:1.

The years are stronger than the hero's might,
They rule the King, they stay the strife.
The wisest cease from toil ere comes the night,
While yet the waning strength has life.

From Pisgah's mount across the Jordan stream,
He trod the path that Moses saw,
And now before him lies his life-long dream,
The open book of Judah's law.

But now the glories of his manhood pale,
No more for him the sun stands still,
Or moon shall pause in Ajalon's soft vale;
The shadows fall despite his will.

But much of mighty work is still undone,
The Promised Land is not yet theirs,
And many battles must be fought and won,
Before the tribes receive their shares.

Other hands the unfinished task must take,
The years have conquered him at last.
He lays his burden down to Him who spake,
Who swayed his future as his past.

JAEL, HEBER'S WIFE

Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a nail of the tent and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him and smote the nail into his temple, and fastened it into the ground, for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.—Judges, iv:21.

Not by the standards of our present thought,
Dare we to measure deeds of old,
That seem so oft with crime and treachery fraught,
Yet did some gracious purpose hold.

Our human gaze through mists obscure and deep,
Can only read the small we know,
While some great promise that has seemed to sleep,
Is brought to light in some swift blow.

So Deborah the praise of Jael sang,
As noblest woman of that day,
Whose deed of valor through all Israel rang,
When fell the hated Canaan sway.

THE FAITHFUL RUTH

And Ruth said: Entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after three, for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God.—Ruth, i:16.

Poor Naomi, now of thy sons bereft,
Why linger in an alien land,
Where naught save bitter dregs of life are left,
The withered hopes, the empty hand?

Back to memory's scenes of childhood turn,
Back, infirm, desolate, alone!
Nay, but gentle Ruth with sweet words that burn,
Has now the stronger, braver grown.

Her love that slumbered as a peaceful brook,
Now like a swollen river flows;
Her race, her creed, and all the past forsook,
She treads the path Naomi goes.

"Entreat me not," she pleads, with tearful eyes.
Then love its hymn of conquest sings,
For blessings came to her from earth and skies,
And David's line of mighty kings.

THE VOICE THAT SAMUEL HEARD

And the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak, for thy servant heareth.—1 Samuel, iii:10.

The child shall weave the garb that age must wear,
Give answer to the sacred voice
That summons it the prophet's task to bear,
With Light Divine to guide its choice.

The Priest of old shall bow to God's decree,
For words so spoken in the night.
And in the pain and anguish yet to be,
He reads that God can do but right.

How solemn and how tender is the call
That comes to childhood's listening ear,
That consecrates to God its heart through all,
And holds no other claim so dear.

The voice that Samuel heard still calls the youth,
In the sweet dawning of their day;
Thrice happy they who hear the sacred truth,
And never from its mandates stray.

DAVID'S LAMENT FOR ABSALOM

But the King covered his face and the King cried with a loud voice, O my son, Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son.—2 Samuel, xix:4.

From Ephraim's woods and far Jordan banks,
The fighting men of Judah's loyal tribe,
Blood-stained and weary from the fierce battle,
And their glorious victory, have come
To join their King, whose crown and life they saved
By valorous deeds that day.

The King heeds not.
Through the open windows above the gate
They hear his cries and groans of bitter grief.
And soon the whisper spreads among the crowd,
"The King will see us not. In yonder room
He hides in mourning for his ingrate son."
Then slowly turn away and seek their tents
As men ashamed from battle lost will shrink.
Why comes he not, brave Judah's lion King?
Why hides he in that upper room alone?

Can trumpet's blare the voice of Nature hush?
May not the King know grief, though he be King?

DAVID'S LAMENT FOR ABSALOM

To-morrow, Joab, merciless and stern,
Shall come with cruel taunt and thin-veiled threat,
Till Duty's cold behest the monarch owns.
Then he will rise and gird his kingly robe,
Sit at the gate where all may plainly see,
To guide and lead his people as before.
To-day the victor's shout dies in a groan,
The wreath of glory fades to withered leaves.
To-day through one bitter, burning hour,
He shall voice the cry of all the ages,
The cry that breaks from hearts who mourn their dead.
All barriers of worldly pride and rank,
All screens that hide the treasures of the soul,
Are swept aside in the imperious rush,
And resistless tide of a parent's love.
The King is man till manhood's debt is paid.

What though that son he mourned had wayward been,
False to all trusts that noble manhood claims?
Was he not still his son? His winsome boy,
Who warmed his father's heart and shared his hopes?

DAVID'S LAMENT FOR ABSALOM

Love outlives the changes of passing years,
Love rules the palace as it sways the hut,
It clasps the poor in its embracing arms,
And binds the truly great with golden chains.
Love conquers all, is masterful, supreme,
And he the greater is who loves the more,
Despite some grievous wound or cruel wrong.

O my son, Absalom, my son, my son.
Would God that I had died for thee, my son.

THE MEAL AND OIL

And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord which he spake by Elijah.—1 Kings, xvii:16.

The rain falls no more. Cherith brook is dry.
Fields are barren, the gardens dead,
Panting with thirst, the cattle helpless lie,
Men fight to give the children bread.

Where shall the prophet go that he may live,
But to Zeraphah, Zidon way?
A widow there from her slender store shall give
The all she has—food for one day.

Can Faith do more than quickly give its all
To cheer some other soul in need?
Where heart responsive beats to Pity's call,
And for the morrow takes no heed?

How oft in darkest hour the light may break,
When Faith had fed the secret flame?
The meal and oil of love shall never slake
When both are given "IN HIS NAME."

THE HEAVENLY HOST

And Elisha prayed and said: Lord, I pray thee open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw, and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.—2 Kings, vi:17.

If our poor sight was purged by Faith and Prayer,
Could we behold the mountains glow,
With the angelic hosts assembled there,
Watching our actions here below,

Could we see horse and chariot of fire,
Guarding God's people round about,
Would that strange, all-glorious sight inspire
Our hearts with love beyond all doubt?

Is Heaven nearer than we have dared to think?
Does this thin veil of sense obscure
The streets of gold, the gates of pearl that gleam,
The healing leaves, the fountains pure?

Why do we shrink appalled from thought of death,
That shades the window of our sight?
A flash, a gasp, a groan, a hush of breath,
And lo! a world all bathed in light!

UZZA AND THE ARK

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him because he put his hand to the Ark and there he died before God.—1 Chronicles, xiii:10.

How sharp the stroke! How swift and sure the blow!
As lightning from an angry cloud!
The wrath of God that lays the greatest low,
That smites the haughty and the proud.

He needs no human arm to save His own,
His Holy Ark shall rest secure,
Sustained by His Almighty hand alone,
It stands upon foundations sure.

'Tis not for man to deem it common thing,
Beside God's sacred Ark to stand,
But holy tasks must due reverence bring,
Not rashly touched with thoughtless hand.

How solemn are the teachings of God's way!
What silent awe surrounds his throne!
Yet here and there we learn His watchful sway,
In love or anger plainly shown.

ATHALIAH

But when Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah.—2 Chronicles, xxii:10.

Why flamed Athaliah that fateful hour,
When first she heard her son was dead?
Was it maternal wrath? Or lust of power,
When from her heart all mercy fled?

How strange that in a woman's breast could sleep
The vampire's thirst for human blood!
What grievous wrong, what wound, however deep,
Could so transform calm Nature's mood?

What but Ambition could such wonder work,
And drown the piteous cry of kin?
Like some demon may that fierce passion lurk,
Till it spring forth, its prey to win.

Woe to the royal seed of Judah's race,
She spares not either sex or age.
Her sword is sharp and swift, but dark her face—
One child alone escapes her rage.

A T H A L I A H

Woe to the Queen who mounts the blood-stained
throne,
Who sceptre holds of fear and hate,
Few are the years that she can call her own,
Ere she lies dead—outside the gate.

THE OLD TEMPLE AND THE NEW

So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout and the noise was heard afar off.—Ezra, iii:13.

How weep they and lament, those ancient ones,
Gray-bearded priests of former days?
The cheering shouts that hail those temple stones
Awake their groans instead of praise.

"How mean," they cried, "these new foundations are,
You have not known the old, as we,
The glorious temple that once stood there,
We never, never more shall see."

So wails of sorrow drowned the voice of joy,
As the new temple rose to view;
And they who in the old had found employ
Could see no beauty in the new.

Yet tears of grief that from the aged flow,
In loving tribute to the past;
And joy of heart that only youth can know,
Shall join in songs of praise at last.

THE RE-BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one, with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.—Nehemiah iv:17.

Whoso would work for God must give his best;
With mind alert, and clear, keen sight.
One hand upon the sword or spear must rest,
While yet he toils prepared for fight.

Slowly the new walls rise on every side;
The gates lift up their heads again.
The "Everlasting Doors" are opened wide,
The Lord of Hosts has come to reign.

They who toiled those weary nights and days,
And saw the glory of it shine,
Long since have gone their lonely, silent ways,
But left their record for all time.

Ye who strive to build God's temple grand,
Whose gates and walls are of the heart,
Behold what heavenly hosts around you stand,
To watch the work they shared in part.

QUEEN ESTHER'S REQUEST

Then said the King unto her: What wilt thou, Queen Esther? And what is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of the Kingdom.—Esther, v:3.

Why stands she there? What seeks this fair young
Queen?
What high ambitions sway her mind?
Her wealth is greater than her wildest dream.
What more of grandeur can she find?

A thousand lives are trembling in the scale;
The fate of kindred, faith, and race.
And well she knows that if her mission fails,
Another Queen will fill her place.

The words that from her lips so gently flow,
No secret hopes or fears betray;
And Haman laughs to see his greatness grow,
And gallows build for Mordecai.

But who can fathom noble woman's ways,
With life or death before her laid?
The feast is o'er. Haman has had his day,
And seeks the gallows he had made.

THE SECRET VISION

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefor I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.—Job xlii:5, 6.

What mysterious depths of human fate,
In grasp of mind, in quests of heart?
What hidden secrets of our love or hate,
May stand revealed when clouds shall part?

The word that falls upon the sleeping ear,
Shall no responsive note awake,
But when the soul alert bends down to hear,
A whisper may our being shake.

We hear of God and yet may know Him not;
His works abound on every side,
His wisdom and His goodness claim our thought,
But in our heart some sin may hide.

Then in some quiet hour, perhaps at night,
A sudden glow illumes our path.
Dazed and bewildered by that august light,
We fain would flee before its wrath.

Straight from its covert leaps the startled sin,
While in the dust we bow our head,
Abashed, abhorred of self—yet purged within—
New life we find, the old is dead.

LORD GUIDE ME WITH THINE EYE

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye.—Psalm, xxxii:8.

Through troubled paths my way has led,
O'er mountains bleak and high,
And oft my anxious steps have sped,
From threatening dangers nigh,
But still with rod and staff I tread.
Lord, guide me with thine eye.

When clouds of doubt hang o'er my soul,
And Faith stands muffled by;
When waves of sorrow o'er me roll,
Still, from the depths I cry,
While blindly groping for the goal,
Lord, guide me with thine eye.

When cherished plans deemed wise or great,
Oft end in sob and sigh,
When some rich blessing crowns my fate,
I had not deemed so nigh,
May I be taught to love and wait.
Lord, guide me with thine eye.

UNDER HIS SHADOW

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.—Psalm, xci:1.

My soul would seek that secret place,
Where I might in Him dwell,
To humbly serve and grow in grace,
And of his wonders tell.

Under thy shadow I would bide,
O thou Almighty One.
Thy greatness would my weakness hide,
Thy love, my sins condone.

OUR REFUGE AND FORTRESS

I will say of the Lord: He is my refuge, and my fortress; my God, in Him will I trust.—Psalm, xci:2.

Does the storm-tossed mariner some haven seek,
Ere the fierce tempest wreck his bark?
Does the lone pilgrim, from age and labor weak,
Hail friendly light to face the dark?
So would my troubled soul its refuge see,
And find that Refuge, Lord, in thee.

When foes within, without, are pressing sore,
And hopeless seems the unequal fight;
Shall not the soldier turn from battle-roar,
To gain some stronghold near in sight?
So when life's combat grows too hard for me,
Do thou, O Lord, my fortress be.

Thy hand can save us from the Fowler's snare,
And from the noisome plague as well.
From pestilence that walks in darkness spare,
Beneath thy shadow we may dwell.
Ah then! ere yet the wreck that death shall see,
Be thou my God: my trust in thee.

THE WAY-SIDE BROOK

He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up the head.—Psalm, cx:7.

With drooping head and weary pace we look,
For shelter from the dust and heat;
And stop to slake our thirst beside the brook,
Where flow the waters cool and sweet.

But forward still our march must bravely be,
Nor cast behind a longing look;
Though future toil and hardship we may see,
We lift our head beside the brook.

And ever in our path through troubled life,
Since first our soul its promise took,
The turmoil, din, and agony of strife,
Are all forgotten at the brook.

How sweet the wayside, soul-reviving brook
That stirs the pulse of life anew,
With waters flowing from the smitten rock,
That Israel in the desert knew!

THE WORTH OF WISDOM

For Wisdom is better than rubies and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.—Proverbs viii:11.

Hail Wisdom! Infinite and eternal thou!
Breath of the Mighty Lord of All!
The morning star upon creation's brow!
The architect of great or small!

The proudest jewel in the crown of kings,
Yet dwelling oft in humblest home,
The highest prize that human culture brings,
While Science claims thee for its own.

No sordid wealth can purchase thee for greed,
Nor victor's sword win thee as prize,
Thy hand shapes worthily our present need,
Thy teaching guides us to the skies.

Thy faintest whisper wrecks the subtle scheme,
That Folly weaves with cunning art,
Thy smile lends courage to the halting dream,
Half hidden in some yearning heart.

Prophets and bards delight to sing thy worth;
Man's noblest deeds reflect thy face
All ages honor thy celestial birth,
The crown and glory of our race!

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Truly, the Light is sweet and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. But if a man live many years and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.—Ecclesiastes, xi:7-8.

How sweet and pleasant are the sun-lit days,
When all our paths are bathed with light?
How clear we follow our appointed ways,
Until there falls the dark, sad night?

The days that darkened are. When none can tell
What greater darkness yet may be,
Since first this veil of shadows on us fell,
But denser, deeper gloom we see.

Will courage last and scent of battle stay,
When darkness wraps thee as a shroud?
When all thy boasted schemes have gone astray,
And years for pity cry aloud?

Give us, O God, the light that never fades,
When sun and moon and stars are not.
Vainly we grope mid hosts of broken aids,
To find the soul's eternal lot.

L O V E

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.—Song of Solomon, viii:7.

O Love, the centuries are all thine own,
Thy coming and thy going tell;
The fruitage that the fleeting years have borne;
The battle and the peace as well.

Thy call is not the sound of trumpet blast
Or drum that tells of martial strife.
A glance, a sigh unlocks the hidden past,
A whisper calls the dead to life.

'Tis not the merchandise of sordid greed,
The floods can never quench its flame.
All of our substance cannot sate its need,
Nor kingly crown, nor world-wide fame.

THE WILDERNESS MADE GLAD

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.—Isaiah, xxxv:1.

The noble stream by many fountains fed,
That sought the sea through Nature's veins,
Turned by will of man and through new channels led,
Now spreads its wealth o'er fertile plains.

The lonely desert whose only yield was sand,
Now blossoms with the grateful vine,
Fair homes and orchards clothe the rescued land,
With fruitful fields for man and kine.

The wilderness with songs of praise resounds,
And laugh of children in their play;
With hum of wheels the solitude abounds;
Time has revealed the Promised Day.

THE SHADOW OF THE ROCK

And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.—Isaiah, xxxii:2.

The wintry winds are cold and bleak,
The night is drawing near;
Thy hiding-place; O wanderer, seek
Some home for rest and cheer.
O wanderer, haste to find
Some hiding-place from chilling wind.

The tempest sounds its loud sea-roar,
The waves are running high,
Thy frail bark steer to nearest shore
To some safe covert nigh.
O mariner, to covert haste
From the wide tempest's dreary waste.

On barren stretch of weary land,
Sore smitten by the dearth;
O thirsting soul, beyond the sand
Is green and fruitful earth.
There living fountains flow,
By rivers sweet the palm-trees grow.

THE SHADOW OF THE ROCK

The burnished sun sheds scorching heat
On fields and panting flock;
O pilgrim, turn and hie to greet
The shadow of the rock.
How sweet the grateful shade
By its calm, quiet grandeur made!

O troubled soul! how slow to learn
Thy refuge for all ills.
The winds may chill, the sun may burn,
But peace the spirit fills:
The peace that knows no fear
Since Christ, the Man, is always near.

THE SWELLING OF THE JORDAN

If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses, and if in the land of peace wherein thou trustedest they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan.—Jeremiah, xii:5.

If in the peaceful flow of common life
We fritter hopes and faithless grow,
How shall we meet the deeper, sterner strife,
When heart and soul to combat go?

The bugle call is heard at early morn,
And golden days are all thine own.
When all is o'er, and broken ranks reform,
What has the final record shown?

If in the battle stress thy heart should cower,
And horse and footman trample thee,
What shall save thee in that fearful hour,
When Jordan's waves shall swollen be?

THE VOICE OF THE SOUL

The Lord is my portion saith my soul, therefore will I hope in Him.—Lamentations, iii:24.

O Soul of mine canst thou with honor say
The Lord thy only portion is,
And He alone shall be thy staff and stay,
His service be thy highest bliss?

Who else can all thy deepest longings still,
And give thy noblest thoughts full flow?
How else can life its highest mission fill,
O Soul of mine—dost thou not know?

Who else for bleeding wounds can healing bring,
And send thee succor from above;
Teach thy sad heart its sweetest notes to sing?
O Soul of mine, dost thou not love?

Who else can shield thee in that blinding hour,
When for safe refuge thou shalt grope;
Hide thee beneath his wings from evil power?
O Soul of mine, canst thou not hope?

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

And he said unto me: Son of Man can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God thou knowest.—Ezekiel, xxxvii:3.

Lo, in that mystic valley, stark and cold,
In ghastly whiteness lie the bones.
A nation dead. No flesh those members hold,
No voice for speech, no heart for moans.

Stagnant, silent all! Sounds that ear had known,
Grown dumb and still—a vanished dream!
The restless toils, the loves and hates have flown,
They slumber there—a pallid gleam.

Shall Death forever rule those bleached bones?
May not far spirits seek their own?
Can heaven or earth recall those scattered ones,
And reason claim again her throne?

Blow ye living winds! From four quarters blow!
The Lord of Life has come to reign.
He bids those bones new flesh and sinews know,
And from grim death new service claim.

The prophet's cry stirs that dark valley through.
Bone comes to bone—skin covers flesh.
A mighty host rides forth with banners new,
With sword of spirit armed afresh.

DANIEL AND THE LIONS

Then the King commanded and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. Now the King spake and said unto Daniel: Thy God whom thou servest continually he will deliver thee.—Daniel vi:16.

The crafty satraps sought with subtle skill,
To weave the web of Daniel's fate.
Should a captive Jew govern them at will?
How envy thus provoked their hate!

Will Daniel give his soul to keep his power,
And barter honor for his place?
Can he stand alone in that dismal hour,
When lions meet him face to face?

His chamber windows open to the West,
The Temple of his Lord is there,
Can doubt or fear find lodgment in his breast?
Three times each day he kneels in prayer.

A thousand idols in Babylon the Proud,
And boundless vice would lure his path,
He calmly turns away from Pleasure's crowd
To meet the lions in their wrath.

DANIEL AND THE LIONS

Why gaze those lions on him in their den,
As if some power controlled their will?
Can wild beasts be more merciful than men,
Lions of Babylon—yet still!

Calmly the Prophet stays there through the night;
They harm him not. When morning grew,
The King beholds him with enraptured sight
And praised the God that Daniel knew.

O noblest type of manhood, in that age!
The peer of kings, how wise or great!
How bright his record on historic page!
What glorious lessons on him wait!

THE LATTER AND THE FORMER RAIN

Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.—Hosea, vi:3.

Then shall we know—if we but faithful be,
And follow on, as we are bid,
His Love Supreme, and of His greatness see,
The Lord, our God, no longer hid.

His going forth, prepared as morning clear,
With glory floods the earth and sky,
He speaks and all the worlds his message hear,
He only is, the Lord Most High.

The rain upon the parched earth descends,
And brings the fields to life again.
So to the thirsting souls his mercy sends
The latter and the former rain.

THE FIG TREE AND THE VINE REVIVE

Be not afraid ye beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig-tree and the vine do yield their strength.—Joel, ii:22.

How dark the picture that the prophet draws,
Of the chosen people, torn and rent,
Their pleasant homes laid waste by cruel wars,
The heathen on their ruin bent.

And then, as broken clouds reveal the light,
Hope from despair exulting springs.
Zion shines once more in radiance bright,
With songs of praise the temple rings.

Fresh verdure clothes the lately-stricken field,
As living streams from mountains flow,
The fig tree and the vine their richness yield,
The herds, once more, their pastures know.

THE FAMINE OF THE WORD

Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.—Amos, viii:11.

What else could slake the hunger of the soul,
If the fountain-head of truth should dry,
And all the crystal streams that from it flow,
Should in their turn grow weak and die?

If from the world was drawn the living word,
With all the wealth of faith it yields;
If never more the prophet's voice be heard,
What shall remain of wisdom's yields?

Can science tell us aught of spirit birth,
Or give to mind its highest flight?
Through four centuries of religious dearth,
What saved the word from darkest night?

How longed they then for the great truths unseen,
That Socrates and Plato sought?
Could dumb idols with all their gold and sheen,
Stand for the God that Moses taught?

But deem not that the Lord his people cast,
To wander vainly for the right;
Behold the Christ of Nazareth at last,
The stars of heaven are shining bright.

THE FALL OF EDOM

Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.—Obadiah, i:4.

Proud Edom, seat of Esau's haughty race,
Built as a mighty nation's throne,
From its tall towers turned a scowling face
On ancient foes to greatness grown,
And swift its heralds on stern mission sent,
To bid the heathen nations band,
And drive hated Judah's tribes, torn and rent,
From their new home in Canaan land.

But vainly that great host in arms conspired
To thwart the plan of God's own way.
Those chiselled rocks whose arts and wealth inspired
The glory of old Egypt's day,
Have silent stood through centuries of night,
For Esau's race has long been dead.
Their towers and tombs slowly fade from sight,
Mid desert sands, whence life has fled.

JONAH AND THE WHALE

Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.—Jonah, i:17.

How strange the story of this prophet told,
His faith and yet his weakness, too!
He fled from duty and yet was very bold,
To tell the Lord what He should do.

Three days and nights in living tomb he spent,
As none before or since e'er did;
And came at last with pride of spirit bent,
To humbly do as he was bid.

We would read it all with reverent thought,,
As lesson from an early day,
Through all the centuries in wisdom taught;
Nor fear what "Higher Critics" say.

WHAT GOD REQUIRES OF US

He hath showed thee, O Man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.—Micah, vi:8.

What wondrous words of grace and beauty fell
From prophet's lips, so long ago !
What majesty and power behind them dwell!
How plain the path of right they show!

Their solemn grandeur points to nobler life,
And stirs the soul with what should be.
While all the causes that engender strife,
Are buried in a silent sea.

No more the heathen idols hold their sway,
The blood of beasts is shed in vain,
Mankind is shown a simpler, purer way,
The calm of happiness to gain.

THE FALL OF NINEVEH

Art thou better than populous No, that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about it, whose rampart was the sea and her wall was from the sea?—Nahum, iii:8.

As fell the mighty Thebes, a world-wide dream,
Of beauty, arts, and royal sway,
Queen of fruitful lands, fed by golden stream,
The pride of Egypt's glorious day,—

So Nineveh, ruler of realms, shall fall,
Her blood-stained wealth, another's spoil,
Her armies crushed 'neath broken tower and wall,
Her nobles sold as slaves of toil.

In vain they call on earth and sea for aid,
The plans of God resistless flow,
Their palaces, and tombs with treasures lade,
Were buried deep, long years ago.

THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE

But the Lord is in his holy temple, let all the Earth keep silence before him.—Habakkuk, ii:20.

The Lord has to his holy temple come,
Let all the Earth in silence stay:
Our Prophet, Priest and King; the only One,
In peace and righteousness his sway.

The waiting land and sea obey his will,
No sounds of stirring vex the air;
The bounding waves and moaning winds are still.
Sweet calm of rest is everywhere.

No more the angry clash of armed foes,
The thunder of the battle plains;
No loud, discordant laugh of vapid shows,
No clamor of the idle games.

The noisy traffic of the marts of trade;
The clanging of the jarring bell,
All life's fretting notes to soft silence fade,
The sobbing and the groans as well.

How clear the skies! How sweet the tranquil peace!
When He whose right it is to reign,
Shall to his earth redeemed come, to cease
The tumult of the toil and pain.

IN THE DAY OF HIS WRATH

Seek ye the Lord all ye meek of the Earth which have wrought his judgment, seek righteousness, seek meekness, it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.—Zephaniah, ii:3.

All ye who love the Lord His presence seek,—
The prophet's voice through ages rings,—
And he who comes with humble heart and meek
Shall shelter find beneath His wings.

Ye who with loving faith His judgments wrought
Nor shunned the trial or the pain,
Who here on earth His righteousness hath sought,
Behold at last the promised gain.

Seek ye the Lord while yet He may be near;
Come not in pride of wealth or art,
But with lowly mind and reverent fear;
The tribute of a grateful heart.

It may be He will reach His saving hand,
And in some cleft of rock hide thee,
When his fierce wrath shall come upon the land,
And from his vengeance none may flee.

THE WORLD'S DESIRE

And I will shake all nations—and the Desire of all nations shall come and I will fill this House with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts.—Haggai, ii:7.

With clear, enraptured gaze the prophet saw
The coming of that glorious day,
When from the temple should go forth the law,
And God's own son the nations sway.

He lifts the curtain dark with human blood,
The blood of nations in their ire,
And saw revealed the bright, effulgent flood,
When Christ should come—the World's Desire.

The Vision tarried long. Dawn seemed far away,
There was no light on Zion's hills:
Her sons and daughters bowed to Roman sway,
And David's throne, a Herod fills.

Then, when He came, how scant the homage paid
A lowly manger in an inn!
But the stars of heaven obeisance paid,
While Angels sang his natal hymn.

THE LATTER RAIN

Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain, so the Lord shall make bright clouds and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.—Zachariah, x:1.

The thirsting kine upon the scorched plain
Have thin and feeble grown for lack of rain,
The brooks are dry, the streams no longer flow,
The withered grass and grain have ceased to grow.
Then in fear the people pray,
Humbly beg the Lord to stay
Dreaded famine from the land,
And the burning, blinding sand.
The Lord in mercy sends the latter rain,
And man and beast and bird rejoice again.

So when souls are hungering for their bread,
The bread of righteousness that prophets fed,
When Faith has sickly grown on sterile fear,
And famine of the Word seems drawing near;
Then the holy seek the Lord,
Plead the promise of His Word,
Then the bright clouds gather fast,
And the rain comes down at last.
Blessed showers that make the temple glad,
And Zion's hills are with fresh verdure clad.

AT EVENING TIME IT SHALL BE LIGHT

But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night, but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light.—Zechariah, xiv:7.

The day shall come at last, day of the Lord,
By seer of old and prophet told,
When heaven shall glow with flame of sword,
And all the world its brightness hold:
When He whose right it is, shall reign,
And peace and righteousness proclaim,
The day that nevermore shall fade to night,
At evening time it shall be light.

Heaven and earth on that great day are one.
That the Patriarch saw in dream,
In his lone vigil, pillowed on a stone,
Is open now. In living stream,
The sons of God come down to earth,
And sing as at creation's birth;
All clouds that hid have rolled away from sight,
At evening time it shall be light.

AT EVENING TIME IT SHALL BE LIGHT

That day the nations shall learn war no more,
Their swords to plough-shares beat, and spears
To pruning hooks. Armies shall not vex the shore,
Nor navies crowd the sea with fears,
The rich and poor shall equal be,
The young and old in joys agree,
No crime or wrong can hide itself in night.
At evening time it shall be light.

Truth to high realms shall soar on fearless wings,
Fair Science comes with learning's gifts.
And treasures, rescued from long ages, brings.
Wisdom's self a bright face uplifts,
And drives away the fabled dreams,
And myths of mountains, groves and streams,
The gods and goddesses that ruled the night,
Ere yet at evening time was light.

The hunger of the soul in quest of good,
Its yearning thirst for sacred lore,
Have full fruition found in the splendor flood,
That stirs all life from heaven's full store.

AT EVENING TIME IT SHALL BE LIGHT

Mists of doubt melt like morning dew,
Reason has filled its mission true.
And Faith is lost in ecstacy of sight,
At evening time it shall be light.

One law, supreme, divine, shall rule the world,
From mountain tops its mandates heard.
Dagon and Mammon from their temples hurled,
Shall burn before the wrathful word.
The martyrs and evangels all,
And they who heard the sacred call,
With crowns of gold and clad in raiment white,
Shall hail, at evening time, the light.

Lo! on that day there is no day but one,
The day that is not day and night;
Nor sun, or moon, or stars, but day alone.
When all the past shall stand in sight;
No vesper bell at eve shall ring,
But choirs of holy angels sing.
The Lord of Hosts has come to reign in might,
At evening time it shall be light.

THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT

Behold, I will send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in, behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.—Malachi, iii:1.

The Lord of Hosts will come to reign. He sends
His messenger before his face,
The sceptre of his mercy he extends,
To all who kneel and plead his grace.

In majesty and glory he shall reign,
And fill the temple with his light;
And they shall gather there with loud acclaim,
Who in his service take delight.

The God of Israel will his people keep,
His Covenant forever stands;
Though his purpose may for centuries sleep,
The times and seasons He commands.

Part Second

New Testament

THE WAY OF JESUS

Those who seek the way of Jesus, as he walked in human sight,
See his footprints in the morning, hear him passing in the night.

Those who trace each wandering step with the hungry eye of love,
Fill their souls with richest treasure, feed on Manna from above.

Through the fields they hear him talking, where the lilies brightly glow,
Where ripe the grain for harvest waves, and the reapers laughing go.

He speaks of birds, fowls of the air, such as neither sow nor reap,
And beasts that need the Father's care, as the cattle and the sheep.

He took young children in his arms, blessed them with his tender touch,
Taught through them the wondrous lesson, that heaven's kingdom was of such.

He went to marriage feast of gladness, turned the water into wine;
He saved poor human souls from madness, drove the demons to the swine.

He often walked by that fair lake, where such gracious things were told,
On sun-lit shore of placid sea, silver cup of liquid gold.

When those bright waves erst calm and still,—waters blue of Galilee,—
Rose in their wild and stormy might, he could bid them peaceful be.

Those who had toiled all night in vain, see him in the early morn,
Hear how he bids them try again, find their nets from fulness torn.

'Tis always so through human lot, those who seek him need not fear,
His loving kindness changes not, and his mercies ever near.

Those who labor, heavy laden, hear him calling, "Come to me":
"Take my yoke, for it is easy; I will bear its weight for thee."

Those who sit in darkened chambers, with Death's shadow on the door,
Hear him calling from the valley, "Take my rod and staff in store."

Is grief too heavy for thy tears? See the drops of
blood he shed.
Are cares too pressing for thy years? Listen to the
words he said.

Ye who love the way of Jesus, blessed way of peace
and grace,
Hear him speaking to all classes, talking with them
face to face.

Ye who love the words of Jesus, words he spake for
common ear,
Shall come to love him more and more, find his ser-
vice ever dear.

Those who walk the way he trod, bearing toil and
pain for him,
He will give them strength and courage, and a bliss-
ful crown to win.

All the nation's yet shall praise him, hail him King
from shore to shore,
While the ransomed hosts of heaven give him glory
and adore.

THE BLESSING OF THE POOR IN SPIRIT

Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.—Matthew, v:3.

The Voice that tarried long had come at last,
From mountain side the Master spake.
His simple words light up Earth's gloomy past,
And from the sleep of ages wake.

The humble men of that hard, iron age,
Who grovelled in the dust of toil;
The meek-souled men who strove for barren wage,
With life so oft the prey of Spoil;

The Poor in Spirit who scant mercy knew,
Oft crushed beneath might's laden wheels;
He blesses them! How wide that blessing grew!
It lifts the weak, their wounding heals.

As breaks the dawn through mists and clouds of night,
So from that Mount his blessing shone,
Wide o'er the valleys spreads the gospel light,
Until the reign of Peace shall come.

THE HOUSE UPON THE SAND

And the rain descended, and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell and great was the fall of it.—Matthew, vii:27.

I built my house upon the sand,
Hard by the restless sea,
I knew the waves might reach the land,
And ruin bring to me.

Yet still I built with cheerful song,
And made the structure fair,
With beam and joint and rafter strong,
To hold my riches there.

Within its halls and chambers grand,
Were treasures of my heart,
Rare paintings brought from foreign land,
Old books, choice works of art.

I built it for myself alone,
Nor cared what others said,
The light that through its windows shone,
Was light as from the dead.

THE HOUSE UPON THE SAND

There was no love that stifles thought,
No hopes that breed dull fear,
My joy was in the things I wrought,
My faith in what was near.

The poor went hungry from my gate,
No priest could enter in,
I cared not for my neighbor's fate.
Why should I pity him?

So days and years slipped noiseless by,
My treasures seemed secure;
With bars and bolts and locks to pry,
What else could make them sure?

I thought with them to spend my day,
And still the thirst of soul,
Content in time to pass away,
With silence for my goal.

But on one dark and fearsome night
The Storm-King rose in wrath.
He smote the land and sea with might,
And ruin marked his path.

THE HOUSE UPON THE SAND

'Twas then my house came tumbling down,
From wave and wind and rain,
And all my garnered wealth was flown,
My toil for them was vain.

On that dreary, desolate shore,
Amid the wreckage thrown,
I heard the Voice that evermore
Should hold me as its own.

I built upon the Rock at last,
Love was its cornerstone.
What fear I now of tempest blast,
Or wild sea's angry moan?

PETER'S DENIAL OF CHRIST

Peter followed afar off.—Matthew, xxvi:58.

Shall we who love the Lord, his cause forsake,
And follow him so far behind?
Can all his foes our vaunted courage shake,
And sway us to a halting mind?

Shall not our love all wavering doubts subdue,
And bring us boldly to his side,
Resolved to bear with him the shame he knew,
And all we have to him confide?

His life is ours, nor should we be dismayed,
Or basely shrink our faith to own,
Though powers of earth and hell should stand arrayed
Against the surety of his throne.

He followed Christ behind—we scarce know why;
Had he dim hopes? Or craven fears?
Or, God would send his legions from the sky?
But, ah! those wretched, scalding tears!

THE OTHER LITTLE SHIPS

. . . And there were also with him other little ships.—Mark, iv:36.

The Storm-King released from the mountains nigh,
Has filled the lake with surging wave,
Where through the night the toiling rowers try
Their slowly sinking boat to save.
And other little ships were near,
Struggling in the wrathful sea,
Battling for life twixt hope and fear,
On storm-swept Galilee.

At last in failing strength and anxious mind,
They wake the Master from his sleep,
Straightway he rebukes the boisterous wind,
And breathes sweet calm upon the deep,
And other little ships were there,
Who watched the tempest flee,
While peace and safety they could share
On blessed Galilee.

So when souls shall struggle in darksome night,
Beset by doubts and bleaching fears,
When waves of anguish hide the guiding light,
And not a star in heaven appears;
Then other little ships draw near,
Watching the dark, sad sea,
To share our grief and soothe our fear
On gloom-clad Galilee.

Then if the Master's voice our tempest stills,
And chides our doubting, faithless mien,
What glow of gladness all our being fills!
How bright the world renewed shall seem!
Other little ships, far or near,
Rejoice that glow to see,
The light that brightens into cheer,
On golden Galilee.

Not we alone the fearsome storm shall meet,
That tries the temper of our soul;
Not we alone the word of promise greet,
That speeds us to our final goal,
For other little ships there be,
That with us sail the sea;
Ships all unknown to you or me,
On silent Galilee.

MARTHA AND MARY

And Jesus answered and said unto her: Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.—Luke, x:41.

Why should we worry over petty things
Until they fill our every thought,
And give the soul no rest?
The craving hunger that so constant asks
For something yet undone of daily tasks?
The greed of fretful quest—
That meagre dole forever sought,
And yet when found, no sating comfort brings?

Why not like Mary choose the better part,
That breathes its calm on troubled life,
The depths of silent sea?
While at the door some holy guest may stand—
Bearing heaven's commission in his hand,
To shape our destiny.
Safe anchorage beyond the strife,
Where quiet peace shall fill the grateful heart.

DRINK FOR THIRSTING SOULS

In the last day, that great day of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying: If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.—John, vii:37.

Whoso would of that living water take,
Stay not, but to the Fountain haste;
There from its gracious fulness freely slake
His thirst, and of its sweetness taste.

The Holy One doth bid thee come and drink,
Hark to His loving call to thee;
Why then delay upon the outer brink,
Why not to thy safe refuge flee?

Who thirsteth not? Who doth not need to find
A healing spring for sin's dark stain?
Who needeth not a balm for weary mind,
Or lasting peace of soul to gain?

THE SERVICE OF LOVE

After that he poureth water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.—John, xiii:5.

How sweet the lesson that the Saviour taught
In his divinely human way,
That pride of rank or wealth should go for naught,
But Love alone should hold the sway.

He shows that whoso would his message heed
May not disdain the humblest toil
That helps a brother in the hour of need,
Or lifts the lowly from the soil.

He reaches out to all the helping hands,
And blesses those who need him most;
His servants speed their way to distant lands,
Nor fear the toil, nor shun the cost.

They nurse the sick and soothe the weary-worn,
The fallen lift; the lonely greet;
At home, abroad, where cross for love is borne,
They wash the dust from earth-stained feet.

THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me.—John, xiv:6.

Where'er my feet are called to tread,
Through journey rough and full of dread,
May I not stray,
From that clear path of duty shown,
And in thy word of sweetness known,
Thou art the Way.

If from pure fountains I would drink,
That I might wisely act and think,
In age or youth,
May thy clear promise doubts dispel,
And bid my soul in calmness dwell,
Thou art the Truth.

For all that gladdens human lot,
And clears of every sinful blot,
Or hateful strife;
For hopes that glow with brighter face,
And meet our wants with helpful grace,
Thou art the Life.

What more can soul of mortal need?
What deeper lesson can he read?
Or loving call?
Since all the swelling waves of time,
But echo back the words sublime,
Christ, All in All.

PETER'S DELIVERANCE FROM PRISON

And behold the Angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison and he smote Peter on the side and raised him up saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.—Acts, xii:7.

Peace reigned within those gloomy prison walls.
Such peace as Power enthroned by Awe can give.
There Peter, by chains to soldiers bound, sleeps
The quiet sleep of those who have no fear.
To-morrow he must stand at Herod's bar,
Prejudged to meet the fate of James, whose life
Was thrown, in lust of blood, to please the Jews.

The prison guards, weary from the heavy strain
Of the Hebrew feast and the crowded streets,
Are resting now, assured that all is well,
And deem the morrow for itself must care.
The stars peer through the window's narrow slits
As if in pity's search for chained ones there.
From the Judean hills a cooling wind,
Sweet with odors of pine and olive groves,
Enters with measured throb as breath of night,
To soothe the life-blood of the sleepers there.

Then suddenly, swift as thought can fly,
The Light shone in that gloomy prison cell,
Not Nature's glow of sun, or moon, or stars,
But Light born in some far Celestial sphere.
Glorious light! Heaven-sent and supreme!
In its radiance wrapt as with a robe,
An Angel came and stood at Peter's side.
With quickening touch he bade him rise,
Gird his raiment and bind his sandals on.
Noiselessly the chains fell from Peter's hands,
And he arose and did as he was told,
Nor questioned aught, but dumbly, as one
Aroused from heavy sleep to dazzling light,
Deems that some strange vision warps his dazed mind,
Meekly he followed as the Angel led
Through gloomy chambers and dim, winding halls,
Past sentinels on guard who mutely gazed,
Past prisoners chained, who moved not in their sleep.
Heedless alike of guards or iron bars,
They swiftly pass their silent, noiseless way,
Nor echo breaks the stillness of the air.

Thus swiftly came they to the prison gate,
So barred and locked as if for life or death.
The key is safely with the warden lodged.
But what are iron bolts or massive keys
To stay God's Angel on His mission sent?
As if impelled by some mysterious power
That governs matter as it governs mind,
That ponderous gate with calm majestic ease
Opened wide, mutely bidding them pass through,
Then closed behind them, fastened as at first.
Before them dimly stretched the quiet street,
Hushed with such silence as precedes the dawn.
Through it they passed, then turned another way,
Where the Angel left him, and Peter, dazed
By the strangeness of it all, as 'twere a dream,
Until he woke to find that he was free.

Straightway he went to meet the mourning band,
Who had spent the night in prayer for him.

F A I T H

For I am persuaded that neither Death, nor life, nor Angels, nor Principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Romans, viii:38-39.

Out of hidden depths it springs,
Its voice with triumph of the warrior rings;
The clear, brave note of glorious victory won,
With doubts and fears forever done,
From mocking foes secure at last;
All its questioning past,
Faith soars on high to brightest world serene,
Above the hills that hide the raptured scene
Beyond the sea of glass that shines as fire,
That quickens all the yearning soul's desire;
Beyond the darkness of the night
To clear effulgent light.

Out into the brilliance of a conquered day,
Where souls unfettered learn the perfect way,
Where all life's past is to its present brought,
And all its present with the future wrought,
Released from strife and blinding fears.

F A I T H

From remorse's scalding tears,
From all alluring bondage free,
O Blessed Liberty!

On the solid rock it stands,
God's promise in its hands;
Nor fears what Death or Life or earthly thing
Or aught that height or depth or power can bring,
Shall serve to loose its grasp on Truths above,
Or stay the fulness of God's Love,
Nor fades away this guiding light
Till Faith is lost in Sight.

CHARITY

And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three, but the greatest of these is Charity.—1 Corinthians, xiii:13.

Sweet Charity that calls the world to thee,
And bids the nations kindred be;
Whose gentle reign upon a throne of Grace,
The wrecks of Sin and Strife efface,
That they who smart with pains,
And they who grope in chains,
May lift their heads and light of gladness see.

Faith may weary grow; falter on the way,
And Hope to other fields may stray,
But Love shall faithful prove through every mood,
And feed some hungry soul with food.
She softly checks the strong,
And bravely chides the wrong,
And throws o'er darkest night some cheering ray.

Love falters not because of time or place,
But ever wears a cheerful face,
She deftly turns aside the poisoned dart,
In malice sent by wicked heart;
Soothes the troubled mind to peace;
Bids war and envy cease.
And breathes a blessing on the human race.

WALKING BY FAITH

For we walk by Faith, not by sight.—2 Corinthians, v:7.

How know we this elusive life of ours,
That comes and goes, somewhere, somehow?
What links these swiftly flitting, fitful hours?
What but a brief, quivering Now?

Before us may hide some dreary, dismal fall,
Or else a dream of rapture new,
But High or Low heeds not our anxious call,
The sight has failed, what can we do?

Then, waking from the spirit's deepest cell,
Faith peers through mist of doubtful way,
To sound the warning note where dangers dwell,
Or speeds the steps that must not stay.

Helpless, impotent and too often blind,
We grope mid shades and cry for sight,
Till led by Faith's sweet hand, the Truth we find
And tread our path with its pure light.

WELL DOING

And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.—Galatians, vi :9.

"Well doing" is the Christian's banner call,
A cheering word, a help in need,
An upright life, with love sincere for all,
This is the fruitage of his creed.

Seed time and harvest in their turn abide,
It is the law that holds the world:
The yield is bounteous and the field is wide,
The cry of want is ever heard.

Who gives the most shall find the largest yield,
Some sow in tears to reap in joy;
And they who weary not, though rough the field,
Shall find in love their sweet employ.

SPEAKING THE TRUTH

Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.—Ephesians, iv:25.

Let Truth have right of way,
Though Error in bedizened garments ride;
Under veil of Beauty its falseness hide;
Heed not what sophists say.

A lie seems a small thing,
But one may be the herald of its kind,
To fill the air, and fill the darkened mind,
And shame and sorrow bring.

That lie, forevermore
Changeless, with brood of evils in its wake,
May gather volume as it rolls to break
On far eternal shore.

Some one knows what we do.
Be our living circle small or great,
Always some neighbor standing at the gate
Hails us as we pass through.

Truth calls on us for yea.
An humble, conscious, obedient will,
The solemn duties of our station fill,
While sin shall have its nay.

ALL THROUGH CHRIST

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—Philippians, iv:13.

The victor's shout rings o'er the battlefield,
From one grown old with many scars;
Who holds aloft the Christian's sword and shield,
His trusty aids through grievous wars.

Not his the glory of the winning side,
No pride of victory his claim.
The "Everlasting Arms" about him bide,
He conquers in his leader's name.

He chants the hymn the Gospel soldier sings,
When battles for the Right are won,
Not for himself the note of triumph rings.
From Christ alone his strength has come.

In vain the tyrant's threat, the cold neglect,
Or scorn of those who Faith deride,
Before that dauntless man, with head erect,
Who knows that Christ is on his side.

THE CHEERFUL CHRISTIAN

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.—Colossians, iii:16.

The blessed words of Christ, how rich they are.
What legacy for heart and mind!
They lift the soul to higher visions far,
Than proud philosophy can find.

The psalms and hymns and songs of grace foreshow
That wisdom is of cheerful birth,
The angels round the throne with praises glow,
And saints may do the same on earth.

Lift up the drooping head and cease to mourn,
With cheerful voice thy brother greet,
The day of gladness for the world was born,
When Earth was trodden by His feet.

THE STRAITENED WAY

Abstain from all appearance of evil.—1 Thessalonians, v:22.

We are as children of the Father's love,
And may not wander on our way,
Lest in forbidden paths of sin we rove,
And lose the gladness of our day.

We would not wound his love or shun his care,
Or bring reproach upon his name.
Why rashly throw aside our filial share,
And mourn too late a needless shame?

Straitened and narrow is the path we tread,
But Love supreme shall be our guide,
If by that hand divine our steps are led,
We need not fear where dangers hide.

THE LORD IS FAITHFUL

But the Lord is faithful who shall 'stablish and keep you from evil.—2 Thessalonians, iii:3.

The Lord, He changes not, but ever sure
His covenant eternal stands.
He gives his children courage to endure,
And clasps in his their willing hands.
All else may fall,
He faithful is—through all.

Upon his present help they learn to rest
Who seek the guidance of his face,
Nor fear what Earth can do their faith to test.
'Stablished by his sovereign grace,
He makes them strong,
In love of Truth and hate of Wrong.

The path of Faith may long and weary seem,
Beset by many evil foes.
But light and gladness on the end shall gleam,
When the rapt soul its fulness knows.
The way grows dear,
The Lord in faithfulness is near.

THE GAIN OF GODLINESS

But Godliness with Contentment is great gain.—1 Timothy, vi:6.

What call ye Gain? Large fruitage of the soil?
More coffers filled with shining gold?
New ventures cleared by prodigies of toil?
Your flocks and herds in larger fold?

What call ye Gain? The stress of bolder thought,
That gleans fresh truth from furrowed fields?
Some secret force by patient science sought,
To fill our life with larger yields?

What call ye Gain? Some trophy won in strife?
Some laurel wreath that tells of fame,
While care eats out the heartiness of life,
And peace is but an empty name?

What call ye Gain? Some feeble, flickering light
That glows through its brief span and dies?
With naught behind it but deeper, denser night,
Dark clouds between us and the skies?

How shall we find that true and lasting gain,
A restful soul, unsoiled by tears,
Where calmness and contentment constant reign,
And Godliness casts out all fears?

LEARNING WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE

Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth.—2 Timothy, iii:7.

Ever seeking to know the thing that is new
Yet never true learning can gain;
Striving for knowledge that ends with the view,
Storing the mind with theories vain.

Forever to learn, yet nothing to know,
That counts for true worth to the soul,
No Faith that will stand Adversity's blow,
No Hope that can see the far goal.

Though clothed with vestments of Science and Art,
The worldly-wise never can know,
The knowledge that Heaven alone can impart
When its light on searching shall glow.

Deep lies the knowledge true learners must seek,
Beyond the bare yieldings of Earth.
The Spirit of Love is gentle and meek,
And Wisdom is holy of birth.

THE PURE IN HEART

Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled.—Titus, i:15.

Sweet the waters that from pure fountains flow,
And rich with blessings on their way;
So from the hearts that only pureness know,
The graces of the spirit stray.

But when the fountains are despoiled and foul,
Then only vileness can they give;
So in the depths of sin-polluted soul,
All thoughts and aims impure must live.

Like answers like, for evil or for good,
As the fountain so is its stream.
We cannot drift through life in careless mood,
Or make our destiny a dream.

O God, through thee alone we stand secure,
As oft through sin we fight our way;
Keep thou our heart and mind and conscience pure,
And guard us from ourselves we pray.

FOR LOVE'S SAKE

Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.—Philemon, i:9.

The fiery zeal of youth no longer burns.
From stern command of early days,
To the sweeter, gentler pleas of love he turns:
Age has changed the apostle's ways.

He still may show his many wounds and scars,
The seals of triumphs he has won.
He still must face the gloomy prison bars,
His work for Christ is not yet done.

His foes may flaunt their hatred in his face,
Their stripes and scornings he can take,
For Faith has wrought in him its mellow grace,
And he beseeches for Love's sake.

ASSURED FAITH

Now Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.—Hebrews, xi:1.

Faith with its silent and mysterious force,
That wraps the soul in firm embrace,
Beholds the mighty truths whose primal source,
No earth-enchanted mind can trace.

It leaves the darkness and the gloom behind,
And bathes in pure celestial light;
Nor ends its search or stays the eager mind,
Till lost in ecstacy of sight.

Faith sees the end no human eye can see,
And hears the voice no ear can sound,
It tastes the sweets of joys that yet shall be,
Where Love has sought and Faith has found.

It builds a world upon foundations new,
Where Hope its full fruition gains,
Nor fears what sorrow, pain, or Death can do,
With God to bless and guide its aims.

THE HEIRS TO THE PROMISED KINGDOM

Hearken, my beloved brethren. Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?—James, ii:5.

Who will the glory of that Kingdom share,
When Christ, the Lord, shall come to reign?
Can rank or wealth secure an entrance there,
Or proud Ambition press its claim?

No eye of man hath seen, or tongue can tell,
What in that Kingdom there shall be,
But souls in peace and righteousness shall dwell,
From every stain of sin set free.

The glow of Earthly rank and state has fled,
The poor have to the heirship come,
The meek and lowly lift a joyful head,
The slaves are free, their work is done.

What Love Divine! What miracle of grace,
That so reverses human fate!
That holds a crown of glory for a fallen race,
When Death has sealed this mortal state.

THE JUDGE AT THE DOOR

Behold the Judge standeth before the door.—James, v:9.

The hour has struck, the Judge is at the door;
The door that guards our inner life:
Its aims and deeds and all our harvest store
Of right and wrong, of love and strife.

What shall we do when secret bars are down,
And all our past lies open wide?
Shall we shrink to have our wanderings known,
Some signs of weakness we would hide?

Some tears we shed, for we have suffered, too;
Will they suffice to cleanse all stain?
Some little good we may have tried to do;
Will that be counted for our gain?

O Judge of all! In that supremest day,
When all our doors shall open be;
Condone our sinful and unsteadfast way,
For "I have loved" our only plea.

GOOD DAYS

For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile.—1 Peter, iii:10.

How shall we live, that living may be sweet,
And "good days" come with cheerful pace?
How curb our lips to sayings wise and meet,
That daily talk show signs of grace?

A kindly word may have mysterious power,
To stir some soul to nobler deed,
Cast gleams of brightness o'er a darkened hour,
Or help some friend in time of need.

A word may herald forth our love or hate,
When measure of the heart it shows,
And plant in other minds the seeds of fate,
Or bring ourselves unmeasured woes.

THE STAR OF PROMISE

We have also a more sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts.—2 Peter, i:19.

If days of darkness come, as come they may,
When Hope seems lost in settled gloom,
When Faith grown timid falters on the way,
And naught we see but coming doom;
Ah! then, if some sure word of promise near,
Should part the murky clouds in twain,
How bright the Morning-Star would then appear!
How stir the heart with strength again!

O Blessed Word! The Christian's guiding Star!
That shows the trembling earth its way,
And though the gloom of night may travel far,
Its light proclaims the dawn of day.
If waves of unbelief sweep o'er the land,
And men grow rich while churches pine;
When sceptics bold in public places stand,
Ah! then, may Stars of Promise shine!

THE LOVE THAT KNOWS NO FEAR

There is no fear in love but perfect love casteth out fear.—1 John, iv:18.

No blemish mars the face of perfect love,
But pure and spotless it must be,
Its strength is fed from living springs above,
That flow with blessings, boundless, free.
It is the bud and flower of joys divine,
For God is Love. Fear hath no place
In souls that nourish Love with trust sublime,
And pray the Holy One for grace.

Love holds the whole created world in cheek,
With gentle mercy at its side.
It lifts the lowly, saves the humble ones from wre
And stays Oppression's cruel tide.
Anger, Hate and Pride,—all that wretched bro
That stalk the earth to maim and fright,
With Doubts and Fears, by Perfect Love withst
Flee as the darkness flees from light.

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THE PASSING WORLD

And the world passeth away.—1 John, ii:17.

Whither have they gone, those unnumbered hosts
That walked the earth by day and night?
Men and women once—now but silent ghosts,
Vanished long since from human sight.

Onward and onward still in swollen ranks,
They cross the river one by one;
Some who would gladly rest upon the banks,
The weary souls who far have come.

The aged Pilgrims with their rod and staff,
The little child of sweet, brief day;
With groan of toilers and merry-makers laugh.
All these from earth have passed away.

Gone from them all, life's scheming, planning hour,
The wealth for which they toiled and spun
The lofty structure of ambition's power;
The broken dream of things undone.

Gone, too, the chilling doubt and scalding tear,
All the madness of wanton crime;
The heart-ache for some sorrow ever near,
The burden-bearing toil and grime.

Faith illumined another world hath found,
With glories far outshining this,
Where death, disease and sin no more abound,
Where living is eternal bliss.

FOR TRUTH'S SAKE

For the Truth's sake which dwelleth in us and shall be with us forever.—2 John, i :2.

"For Truth's Sake" is the stern yet loving call
That cheers the martyr at the stake,
That summons conscience from lethargic thrall,
And bids the dormant spirit wake.

It sternly weighs our purposes and deeds,
Inspires the mind to noblest quest,
Gives to the heart the blessed peace it needs,
And stills the yearning soul to rest.

Calm and serene, truth in its oneness dwells,
Above the worldlings' easy creed,
Nor heeds the lures that godless Reason spells,
Or myths that subtle sceptics breed.

If truth within us dwell, what power can stay
Its constant reign when Time has fled,
Through that glorious and unending way,
When falsehood and deceit are dead?

WHAT TO FOLLOW

Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good.—3 John, i:11.

What grace adorns the simple words he speaks,
He who had known and loved the Lord;
And yet what weighty truth for one who seeks
True light and guidance for this world.

How moral life and death hang in the scale!
A peaceful end and blissful goal,
Or strife and bitterness and sorrow's wail,
With loss of body and of soul.

For Sinai's thunders send a warning voice,
That finds an echo from the Cross,
'Twixt good and evil lies momentous choice,
The one all gain—the other loss.

THE DOXOLOGY

To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever after. Amen.—Jude, i:25.

The words of counsel and monition rest,
The pleadings of the prophets cease;
As falls the dew on Nature's quiet breast,
So falls the evening prayer of peace.

To Him alone from whom all wisdom flows,
Be honor and dominion shown,
Through all created worlds his splendor glows,
The only wise, the Glorious One.

He knows our weakness and our strivings, too;
All our sad sinning, now and past,
And tells us plainly all that we must do,
To gain his blessing at the last.

HE THAT OVERCOMETH

He that overcometh shall inherit all things and I will be his God and he shall be my son.—Revelation, xxi:7.

In His Father's House, where the many mansions be,
Christ's faithful ones shall find their home,
And though, at times, the way seems long and drear,
Beset by many foes of doubt and fear,
Yet those who strive and overcome,
Shall promised ending of their hardships see.

Then they who bravely toiled in foreign fields,
Shall hail the day of "Harvest Home,"
Where they who sowed in tears shall reap in joy,
And they who in his cause found sweet employ,
And struggled hard to overcome,
Shall find the rest that faithful service yields.

They who as soldiers of the Cross enrolled,
And in His Name the battle won;
Who sternly frowned on compromise with sin,
And bravely fought its wiles, without, within;
Till all its power was overcome,
Shall at the last their King and Lord behold.

THE RIVER AND THE TREE OF LIFE

And he showed me a pure river of water of Life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb.

In the midst of the street of it and on either side of the river was there the tree of Life.—Revelation, xxii:1-2.

From the throne of God and the Lamb it flows,
This river as crystal so pure;
And the Tree of Life that on the bank grows,
All sinning and weeping shall cure.

Soft are the shadows of the healing leaf,
Those who bear the heat of the day,
Lay down their garner of basket and sheaf,
And rest from the toils of the way.

Onward and ever those pure waters glide,
Nor years nor storms disturb their breast,
And ever that Tree on its bank shall bide,
While sad souls are sighing for rest.

Onward and ever that mystical stream,
Flows from the Great White Throne above,
While pain and death are never more seen,
And all that remaineth is love.

Then the myriad streams of human thought,
Shall flow into that boundless sea;
Where the ransomed world to its home is brought,
Whose King, the Lord of Life, shall be.

Who in that world of blessedness shall live,
Where none are known as rich or poor?
Who in that mighty Song of Praise shall give,
Their notes to swell the volume more?

RETROSPECTIVE

I stood at evening tide beside the curb
Of an old well and looked down on water
Deep, silent, motionless. No soft wind blew,
No ripple stirred its calm, placid surface.
Beneath were secret springs that ever fed
The well and kept the water sweet and pure,
But I could see them not.
Intent, I gazed
Upon that voiceless and mysterious depth,
Wondering much what might be hidden there.
While I looked and pondered, lo, a bright star,
The harbinger of Night, shone in the sky,
And flashed its message on the well's dark face.
Beautiful it seemed, e'en in solitude.
It was not long alone. Soon other stars,
And others still, shone out, above, below,
Until the waters of that ancient well
Erstwhile so calm and mute, luminous grew
With stars, one by one, and the skies above
Seemed joined to earth in loving clasp.

RETROSPECTIVE

I thought
How pure and sweet, and healthful those waters were
That the stars of heaven had kissed.
Then I deemed
That it was so with that ancient Book of Life,
Into whose fathomless depths he who looks
With humble, reverent search, shall see
The light of heaven shine upon each page,
Making luminous that before was dark.

INDEX

SUBJECT	REFERENCE	PAGE
The Bible		6
The Bond of Earth and Sky	Gen., viii:22	9
The Manna	Exod., xvi:15	10
The First Fruits	Levit., ii:12	11
The Unchanging God	Num., xxiii:19	12
The Merciful God	Deut., iv:31	13
Joshua's Old Age	Joshua, xiii:1	14
Jael, Heber's Wife	Judges, iv:21	15
The Faithful Ruth	Ruth, i:16	16
The Voice That Samuel Heard	1 Samuel, iii:10	17
David's Lament for Absalom	2 Samuel, xix:4	18
The Meal and Oil	1 Kings, xvii:16	21
The Heavenly Host	2 Kings, vi:17	22
Uzza and the Ark	1 Chron., xiii:10	23
Athaliah	2 Chron., xxii:10	24
The Old Temple and the New	Ezra, iii:13	26
Rebuilding of the Temple	Neh., iv:17	27
Queen Esther's Request	Esther, v:3	28
The Secret Vision	Job, xlii:5, 6	29
Lord Guide Me with Thine Eye	Psalms, xxxii:8	30
Under His Shadow	Psalms, xci:1	31
Our Refuge and Fortress	Psalms, xci:2	32
The Wayside Brook	Psalms, cx:7	33
The Worth of Wisdom	Prov., viii:11	34
Light and Darkness	Eccl., xi:7, 8	35
Love	Song of Solomon, viii:7	36
The Wilderness Made Glad	Isaiah, xxxv:1	37
The Shadow of the Rock	Isaiah, xxxii:2	38
The Swelling of the Jordan	Jer., xii:5	40
The Voice of the Soul	Lam., iii:24	41
The Valley of Dry Bones	Ezek., xxxvii:3	42

I N D E X

SUBJECT	REFERENCE	PAGE
Daniel and the Lions	Daniel, vi:16	43
The Latter and Former Rain	Hosea, vi:3	45
The Fig Tree and the Vine Revive	Joel, ii:22	46
The Famine of the Word	Amos, viii:11	47
The Fall of Edom	Obad., i:4	48
Jonah and the Whale	Jonah, i:17	49
What God Requires of Us	Micah, vi:8	50
The Fall of Nineveh	Nahum, iii:8	51
The Lord is in His Holy Temple	Habakkuk, ii:20	52
In the Day of His Wrath	Zeph., ii:3	53
The World's Desire	Haggai, ii:7	54
The Latter Rain	Zech., x:1	55
At Evening Time It Shall be Light	Zech., xiv:7	56
The Messenger of the Covenant	Mal., iii:1	59
The Way of Jesus		63
The Blessing of the Poor in Spirit	Matth., v:3	66
The House Upon Sand	Matth., vii:27	67
Peter's Denial of Christ	Matth., xxvi:58	70
The Other Little Ships	Mark, iv:36	71
Martha and Mary	Luke, x:41	73
Drink for Thirsting Souls	John, vii:37	74
The Service of Love	John, xiii:5	75
The Way, the Truth and the Life	John, xiv:6	76
Peter's Deliverance from Prison	Acts, xii:7	77
Faith	Romans, viii:38–39	80
Charity	1 Cor., xiii:13	82
Walking by Faith	2 Cor., v:7	83
Well Doing	Gal., vi:9	84
Speaking the Truth	Eph., iv:25	85
All Through Christ	Phil., iv:13	86
The Cheerful Christian	Col., iii:16	87

I N D E X

SUBJECT	REFERENCE	PAGE
The Straitened Way	1 Thess., v:22	88
The Lord is Faithful	2 Thess., iii:3	89
The Gain of Godliness	1 Tim., vi:6	90
Learning Without Knowledge	2 Tim., iii:7	91
The Pure in Heart	Titus, i:15	92
For Love's Sake	Phil., i:9	93
Assured Faith	Heb., xi:1	94
Heirs to the Promised Kingdom	James, ii:5	95
The Judge at the Door	James, v:9	96
Good Days	1 Peter, iii:10	97
The Star of Promise	2 Peter, i:19	98
Love That Knows no Fear	1 John, iv:18	99
The Passing World	1 John, ii:17	100
For Truth's Sake	2 John, i:2	102
What to Follow	3 John, i:11	103
The Doxology	Jude, i:25	104
He That Overcometh	Rev., xxi:7	105
The River of Life and the Tree	Rev., xxii:1	106
Retrospective		108

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